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5 November 1963

LAOS WEEKLY SITUATION REPORT
(Information as of 1000 EST 5 November)

I. Political

A.

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2. While the Soviets may be prepared to supply some equipment to the Neutralists (replacement LI-2 aircraft, for example), it is unlikely that they would be willing to provide anything more than token aid over the protests of the Pathet Lao. The emphasis on the need for "mutual understanding" among the three factions, expressed in a 2 November communique issued on Souvanna's departure, would suggest that the Soviets are thinking in terms of a tripartite request for assistance rather than aid to Souvanna's Neutralist forces.

B. Souvanna in Delhi for talks with Nehru: Souvanna arrived in Delhi on 4 November for talks with Nehru. The principal topic of conversation is likely to be the need for stronger action by the International Control Commission, of which India's Avtar Singh is currently serving as chairman.

C. Friction developing between General Phoumi and Colonel Siho:

1. Colonel Siho, chief of the 8,000-man internal security force, recently stated he had "lost confidence" in General Phoumi. Phoumi, according to Siho, had failed to come through on promises of advancement in rank as well as increased support for his force.

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2. Phoumi probably will take steps to forestall a complete rupture, however. The right-wing leader has long counted on the presence of three of Saho's "elite" battalions stationed near Vientiane to discourage opposition coup attempts.

D. Uneasy relationships among Neutralist officers:

1. Kong Le has expressed concern over the rising influence of General Amkha, chief of the Neutralist Special Cabinet in Vientiane, and has suspicions that Amkha is out to displace him as the commander of the Neutralist forces.
2. Kong Le's suspicions are not entirely without foundation. Amkha in the past has spoken slightly of Kong Le's abilities and has become associated with a group of Neutralist officers who object to Kong Le's willingness to ally with the FAR against the Pathet Lao. Chief among these officers is Colonel Leuang, Amkha's G-2, who has long pressed for a more strict neutralism as the way to preserve the coalition.

II. Military

A. Operations:

1. Enemy forces are continuing in their efforts to strengthen their control over Route 7, the key artery leading to the Plaine des Jarres from North Vietnam. On 2 November a Meo strongpoint at Tha Lin Noi [redacted] was captured; the next day enemy troops forced the Meos from another position at Phou Se Bott [redacted] a mountain located about seven miles to the north of the route.

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2. On the Plaine des Jarres, activity was centered in the Lat Houang [redacted] region where several artillery exchanges and skirmishes were noted. Other activity

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was reported near Ban Si Khoun [redacted]
and at Ban Pa Hay [redacted] to the north
of the Plaine.

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3. Reports of enemy action were also received from the Nhommarath area where a Pathet Lao company on 29 October moved against elements of the Neutralist 8th Special Battalion.

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4. In the Nam Ngum area southeast of Vang Vieng, Neutralist and right-wing forces were reported continuing their "mop-up" action against Pathet Lao units near Ban Veung Son [redacted]

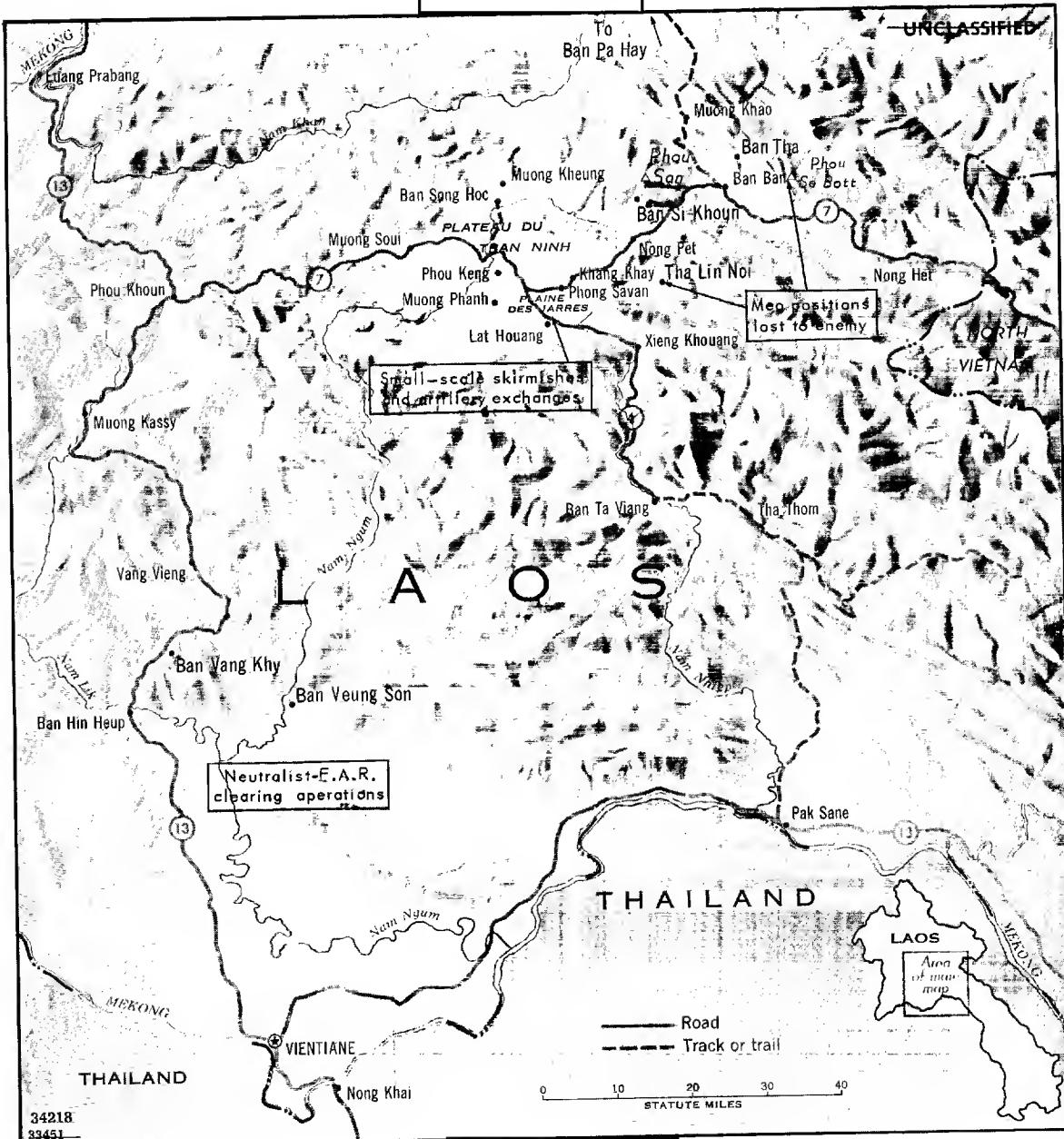
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